

STS-107 MISHAP RESPONSE TEAM (MRT) #1 MEETING MINUTES
Saturday, February 1, 2003

The chairperson, Ms. Linda Ham, convened the first combined Mishap Response Team (MRT) and Mishap Investigation meeting at 9:30 a.m. All members were in attendance at JSC or via teleconference.

Mr. Ron Dittmore, the Space Shuttle Program Manager asked all centers to immediately impound all mission data, to invoke their contingency action plans, and for the External Tank ascent imagery to be secured.

Mr. Milt Heflin of the Flight Director Office reported that during entry, flight controllers noted loss of hydraulic temperature data and Orbiter bond line temperatures going higher. The Orbiter altitude was approximately 200,000 ft. and the airspeed was Mach 18 at the time data was lost. All facilities have been secured and data impoundment has begun.

Lt. Col. Tim Lee representing the DDMS and a member of the Mishap Investigation (MIT) team reported that the U.S. Air Force rescue coordination had been activated. The debris field extends from Dallas, TX to south of Tyler, TX. The FAA has reported debris in the Florida panhandle but there are no confirmed reports. The Air Force RCC is operating 24 hrs. /day and will be the command post until a permanent one is established. Military assets have been deployed and are working with local authorities to find and secure any debris. Instructions have been given to identify the debris, but not disturb it since it could be hazardous. The most logical establishment of a debris collection point is in East Texas.

Mr. David Whittle, Chairman of the MIT requested that a news media release should be made, to inform the public to contact local law enforcement authorities of debris and to provide a nationwide number to call in debris reports. Mr. Kelly Humphries of the JSC Public Affairs Office stated that an announcement had been broadcast on NASA Select TV. Work started on defining a local debris collection point. The MIT will look at MCC tracking data, and local reported information, to establish the search area.

Mr. Ralph Roe of the Space Shuttle Vehicle Engineering Office reported that the Mission Evaluation Room (MER) had invoked their emergency plan and were generating narratives of observations and producing engineering timelines. A meeting is scheduled later this afternoon to status timeline development. The ascent ET foam debris data is being re-analyzed. Mr. Dittmore stated that information on the left wing and all data, especially debris, associated with it is very important and noted the importance of an immediate daylight search. Mr. Roe requested debris location predictions especially for the crew compartment. Mr. Ron Epps of the JSC Flight Design and Dynamics Division will take responsibility for providing debris location predictions.

Mr. Lambert Austin of the Space Shuttle Systems Integration Office reported that data was being impounded and the United Space Alliance (USA) Space Flight Operations Contractor (SFOC) had initiated contingency plans and were ready to support.

Mr. Alex McCool of the Marshall Space Flight center (MSFC) reported that all projects were securing data and hardware.

Gen. Michael Kostelnik, the HQ Contingency Action Team (HCAT) chairman reported that Deputy Administrator, Fred Gregory, was in contact with the Administrator and that the HCAT was manned 24hrs. /day. Associate Administrator for Space Flight, Bill Readdy, reported that the Administrator had contacted the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Administrator and Mr. Readdy will conduct an 11:15 a.m. EST press conference to summarize the facts including: 1) loss of contact at 9:00 am EST, 2) that a contingency had been officially declared at 9:16 a.m. EST, 3) receipt of a video from a TV station southeast of Dallas, 4) all mission data was being impounded, 5) the reported ascent foam debris hit on the left wing was reviewed and not determined to be safety of flight issue, and 6) there was no indication of foul play. Another press briefing is scheduled no earlier than 1:00 p.m. EST to make a brief statement and provide contact points and to provide a warning on potential debris hazards. A technical press briefing will be scheduled at 3:00 p.m. EST.

Mr. Dittmore remarked that the first priority was crew recovery and their families. Careful handling of the left wing data should be exercised and it is very important to perform a careful analysis and not jump to any incorrect conclusions. Debris handling could be hazardous and the debris impact footprint is in work. The DOD mission is to

search, identify debris locations, and secure those areas. Additionally, the Homeland Secretary, Mr. Tom Ridge, has been advised of the situation. Ms. Ham closed the meeting and announced that the next combined MRT/MIT meeting would be at 1:00 p.m. on Feb. 1, 2003.

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